

Environment Fact Sheets

Government spending on environmental protection in Canada, 2008 to 2016

by Environment, Energy and Transportation Statistics Division

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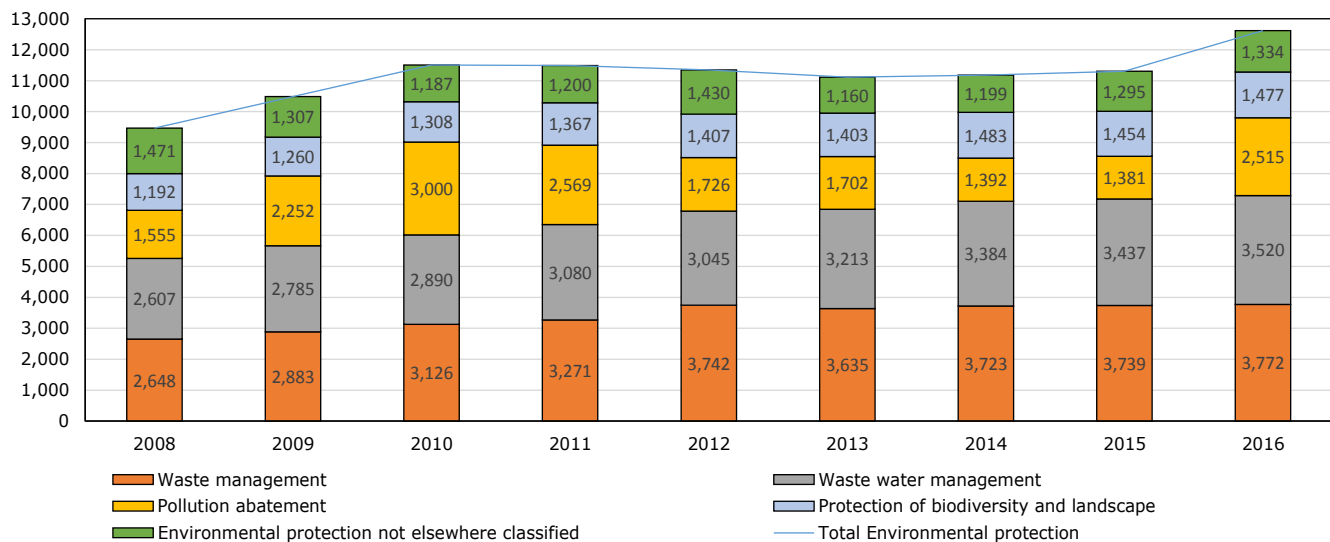
by Environment, Energy and Transportation Statistics Division

The spending on environmental protection of the Canadian General Government (CGG) - federal, provincial-territorial and local governments combined - ranged from \$9.5 billion in 2008 to \$12.6 billion in 2016. Environmental protection, one of ten Canadian Classification of Functions of Government (CCOFOG) categories, is defined as activities, 'whose primary purpose is the prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution and other forms of degradation of the environment'.¹

The main environmental protection categories² are waste management, waste water management, pollution abatement, and protection of biodiversity and landscape (Chart 1).

Chart 1
Canadian General Government spending of each environmental protection category, 2008 to 2016

million dollars



Sources: Statistics Canada. No date. Table 385-0041 Canadian Classification of Functions of Government (CCOFOG) by consolidated government component (table). CANSIM (database). Last updated January 11th, 2018.

1. International Monetary Fund. *Government Financial Statistics Manual*, 2014. pp. 142. The CCOFOG definition of environmental protection is based on the Classification of Environmental Protection Activities (CEPA) found in: United Nations. *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012 – Central Framework*, 2014. pp. 96. Environmental protection excludes program expenses arising from natural disasters.
2. Total environmental protection also includes "Environmental protection not elsewhere classified" which are expenses such as R&D, general administration, education specific to environmental protection, or programs with multiple environmental protection activities but could not isolate their main activity.

Government spending on environmental protection in Canada, 2008 to 2016

Table 1
Year-over-year change in Canadian General Government spending of environmental protection categories

	2008 to 2009	2009 to 2010	2010 to 2011	2011 to 2012	2012 to 2013	2013 to 2014	2014 to 2015	2015 to 2016	2008 to 2016
	percent								
Total Environmental protection	11	10	0	-1	-2	1	1	12	33
Waste management	9	8	5	14	-3	2	0	1	42
Waste water management	7	4	7	-1	6	5	2	2	35
Pollution abatement	45	33	-14	-33	-1	-18	-1	82	62
Protection of biodiversity and landscape	6	4	5	3	0	6	-2	2	24

Source: Statistics Canada, 2018. Based on data from CANSIM table 385-0041.

On a per capita basis, CGG spending on environmental protection was \$348 in 2016. In comparison, the CGG spent \$4,627 per capita on social protection and \$4,626 per capita on health.

All three levels of government participate to protect the environment and as a proportion of total CGG expenses, environmental protection was consistently around 2% of total expenses over the period.

Overall, CGG spending on environmental protection grew 33% between 2008 and 2016. However, within the CCOFOG categories (Table 1), spending fluctuated over time, reflecting the changing policy priorities of government, as well as spending to conform to environmental regulations and acts.

Solid waste and waste water management make up the bulk of environmental protection spending

CGG spending on environmental protection was directed primarily at waste management and waste water management; two traditional areas of expenses for governments. In 2016, 58% of environmental protection expenses were dedicated to providing these services.

Between 2008 and 2016, waste management spending increased by 42%, and waste water management spending increased by 35%. Most of the spending on waste and waste water management is attributable to operation and maintenance costs.

Over 90% of CGG spending for these two categories takes place at the provincial-territorial and local government (PTLG) level.

Program spending for pollution abatement shows variation

Spending by the CGG on pollution abatement programs was more variable than the other environmental protection categories, showing marked increases and decreases between 2008 and 2016. Particularly between 2015 and 2016, pollution abatement spending increased 82% compared to the previous period. This increase predominately contributed to an overall rise in total environmental protection spending for that year (+12%). The highest level of pollution abatement expenses was \$3 billion in 2010.

The variability in pollution abatement spending was largely driven by transfer payments across the study period. Transfer payments are provisions of goods, services or assets. They are one method that governments use to support the environmental protection activities of businesses, households and non-profit organizations.

This category relates to pollution abatement of air, land, water, noise and radiation. Some program examples are monitoring the quality of air, water and soil, as well as remediation activities, pollution prevention programs and, energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.

Consistent spending on protection of biodiversity and landscape

Protection of biodiversity and landscape spending averaged just over 10% of total environmental protection spending during the study period. In 2008, spending on protection of biodiversity and landscape was close to \$1.2 billion and climbed 24% to almost \$1.5 billion in 2016.

Examples of government spending on biodiversity and landscapes include federal and provincial parks, wildlife and species monitoring and watershed conservation projects.

Note to readers

Canadian General Government (CGG) combines federal government data with provincial-territorial and local government data, but excludes data for the Canada Pension Plan and Quebec Pension Plan.

Provincial–territorial and local government (PTLG) includes provincial and territorial governments, health and social service institutions, universities and colleges, municipalities and other local public administrations, and school boards.

CGG expenses include compensation of employees, use of goods and services, subsidies, grants, social benefits among other expenses.

There are a total of 10 CCOFOG categories. The two examples, health and social protection, mentioned in the text are defined as:

Health – includes expenses for medical products, equipment, appliances, outpatient services, hospital services, public health services, R&D health and healthcare not elsewhere classified.

Social Protection – includes program expenses for sickness and disability, old age, survivors, family and children, unemployment, housing, social exclusion not elsewhere classified, R&D social protection and social protection not elsewhere classified.

Per capita data are based on population estimates for Canada available in CANSIM table 051-0001 (<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=0510001&&pattern=&stByVal=1&p1=1&p2=50&tabMode=dataTable&csid=>).

(CCOFOG Daily Release) (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/180111/dq180111b-eng.htm>).

(CCOFOG Classification Structure) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=201435&CVD=201437&CPV=705&CST=01011960&CLV=2&MLV=4>).

(CCOFOG Methodology) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-bmdi/document/5218_D3_T9_V1-eng.htm).